



Photo submitted

Anita Harrod received the first Donate Life license plate in Franklin County on April 1. A 14-year liver recipient, Harrod is pictured with County Clerk Jeff Hancock and Circuit Clerk Sally Jump. The new plates will hopefully increase awareness about the need to have as many names as possible on the Kentucky Organ Donor Registry.

Month designation brings awareness to organ donation

Special to The State Journal

April is National Donate Life Month, a celebration that showcases the various perspectives of those touched by donation and transplantation.

Every year since 2002, April has been filled with stories to spread the life-saving message of donation in order to motivate people to register as organ, eye and tissue donors. A new Donation Awareness license plate became available on April 1.

Everyone can register as a donor at www.donatelifeky.org or say "yes" when renewing your driver's license.

Approximately half of the U.S. adult population is registered as donors, including 1.5 million Kentuckians. Still, the

number of people in need of transplants continues to outpace the number of donor organs.

On average, 21 people die each day because the organs they need are not donated in time. Registering to become a donor is the most effective way to ensure you can save lives through donation.

While the Circuit Clerk's office in the courthouse issues driver's licenses, the Donate Life license plates are issued at the County Clerk's office.

Donor stories

Carolyn Adkins, of Pike County, is thankful for the lifesaving gift of donation.

She had lived a healthy life, even teaching Silver Sneakers workout classes, but she began to

lose energy. She went to the hospital and learned that only 25 percent of her heart was working. A heart transplant was her only hope for a life.

"You read this sort of thing that happens to other people," she said. "I'm just a regular person, but it happened to me and my family."

Fortunately, a matching donor was found and now Carolyn is living life to the fullest and sharing her story to show the lifesaving power of donation.

"My donor is the real hero. I'm very thankful for them and pray for them. They are indescribably wonderful. I have a wonderful life now — through God, through my donor family, through my doctors."

Sam loves doing things any 10-year-old

boy loves to do: drawing, fishing and riding his bike. But he cannot do much in his current state of health. Sam needs a lifesaving pancreas, small bowel and liver transplant, so he can go back to being a normal kid again. Sam has a champion in his mom, Mallory, who is fully committed to spreading the message of Donate Life.

The Donate Life plate encourages individuals to put the gift of donation into perspective stating "Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation Saves Lives." This statement illustrates the grandeur of what a simple "yes" at the driver's license office has the ability to do.

To register as a donor, learn about the license plate, or to get involved, call 1-866-945-5433.